

I am pleased to be making this my second Annual Report, having been re-elected as Chair at the 2016 Annual Parish Council Meeting last May. However this will be my last Annual Report since I will be standing down as Chair, for reasons of health, at the 2017 Annual Parish Council Meeting next month. Roger Neale stood down as Vice Chair last May, also for health reasons and Adrian Whatmore was elected in his place.

I am pleased to report that the rest of the Council appear fairly fit.

Roger Neale remains on the Council, as I intend to do.

Also at the May meeting Rob Beckley and Eric Newcombe were co-opted as Councillors. However, Rob Beckley having retired from the Police Force with many plaudits and a rather good party, was persuaded to rejoin the Force as an Assistant Commissioner in the Metropolitan Police to head up an enquiry connected with the Hillsborough tragedy, and was obliged to resign from the Parish Council, and in December Bee Hopcroft of Quarry House was co-opted on to the Council in his place.

In March, District Councillor Charlotte Edwards, having sent her apologies in respect of a number of Parish Council meetings resigned, and has been replaced by now County and District Councillor Ross Henley.

Over the last year the Council has considered 30 Planning Applications, 20 for Observation and 10 for Decision.

In July the Council nominated Roz Meikle and Jane Knight as joint recipients of the Chairman of the County Council's Award for Service to the Community, in respect of their work with Village Spirit.

I am very pleased to report that Liz Christie's huge efforts with regard to the defibrillator came to fruition during the year, and that the defibrillator has been installed at the Playing Field Pavilion. Liz is now working on finalising the Volunteers and the telephone tree. She is also looking at the possibility of having a second defibrillator installed in Pitminster Village.

In January David Edmondson was rewarded for his persistence by being able to report that County Highways had agreed to move the 30mph signs at the north end of Blagdon Hill northwards, increasing the chance of vehicles actually complying with the speed limit as they entered the village.

In February, 27 members of the public attended the Parish Council meeting to debate an idea that had been aired by persons connected to the Legg family, who own the land lying to the south of Sellicks Green Playing Field. Broadly speaking the idea was that although it is unlikely that this land would receive planning permission for development, if works of public benefit, such as a new Village Hall were included in a scheme, then matters might proceed to the mutual benefit of the Legg family, The Playing Field Association and the Parish generally. The same idea had also been put to the PFA Committee, who rejected it, as did the February meeting of this Council. Interestingly, at our meeting last month, other persons perhaps more closely connected to the owners of the land attended the meeting and issued a statement to the effect that the idea should not have been floated in the first place. May all the rumours now cease.

I must mention Adrian Whatmore's continuing battle to achieve high speed broadband in the Parish. The multi million pound fine recently imposed on BT in respect of their failures explain in part the difficulties he faces. Adrian also retains responsibility for everything relating to Public Footpaths in the Parish.

I must also mention Margaret Lee who keeps us up to date with all things Blackdown Hills. Lastly I must mention our Clerk Richard Tyzack, who does his best to keep us on the straight and narrow. He isn't always successful : I recently disqualified the Council from dealing with a

planning application because I had shown prejudice in the case by telling the applicant that the application had the support of the Council, which it had, but I shouldn't have said so prior to the meeting. I have learned my lesson.

I do thank Richard for his support during my chairmanship

If there is anything that you would like to ask any of the Councillors, now is your opportunity.